

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-6, 8-12 and 14-15 are pending in the application. Applicants have amended claim 1 and respectfully request reconsideration in view of the amendment and the following arguments.

Applicants first submit that the claims have been amended to clarify that the hydrophilic support is a sample loading support and is in contact with the cathode at one end. Support for the amendment can be found in the specification, see paragraph 30 of the US patent application publication.

Claims 1-6 and 8-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner regards unclear if the hydrophilic support and the acidic interval IPG gel are the same or different element. Applicants submit that as the specification made clear, the hydrophilic support and the IPG gel are different elements. See for example paragraph 14 of the US patent application publication.

Claims 1, 2, 10, 12 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Rice et al. in view of Gianazza et al. Claims 3-6, 8, 9, 11 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Rice et al. in view of Gianazza et al. and further in view of Carlsson et al. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Applicants submit that Rice does not relate to a membrane loader that is placed **in contact with the cathode**. In Rice the membrane loader is simply placed in contact with the gel such that sample is released when they are in contact with the gel. The membrane loader is not connected to the cathode. Thus, the sample loading in Rice and the present

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invention are different. None of the newly cited references Gianazza or Carlsson cures the deficiency of Rice. Thus, the combinations do not render the claims obvious.

Applicants assert that the claims are in allowable form and earnestly solicit the allowance of claims 1-6, 8-12 and 14-15.

Early and favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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